17: Tannous S, G-5 (ca. 1947-48)1947? MEI Lebanon MEI

are numerous and varied. A large number of these are related to the religious life of the community. In addition to the regular weekly holiday and other general holidays of the Christians or Moslems, there are several community festivals held in honor of particular patron saints. Each of these festivals is an occasion for people of several villages to get together and celebrate, sometimes for two or three days at a time. They visit, trade, compete in games, compose folk poetry, participate in religious chanting or group singing, and dance the well-known folk dance, the *dabki*.

In a similar manner the people celebrate the harvesting of some of their crops. Also in the *sahra* they have a well-developed recreational institution: an evening get-together at one of the homes to visit, play games, or listen to a story being read or told. At the time of a wedding or a funeral, practically the whole community, old and young, halts its routine activities and participates in the affair. Here again the group manifests its solidarity and takes a new hold on life by expanding its happiness in the first case, and by lightening the burden of its sorrows in the second.

The village community of Lebanon is thus essentially a co-operative unit: in its family organization, in its traditions of neighborliness, in its religious institutions and social life, in its educational efforts. Co-operation, in one degree or another, is also involved in many agricultural activities such as the threshing of grain, the sharing of draft animals, and the assigning of water rights.

One can readily see in this a promising and secure foundation on which to establish a successful organization of agricultural co-operatives according to modern principles and techniques. In fact, a beginning has already been made along this line. In 1944 the Lebanese Government passed a decree providing for the establishment of a co-operative council, whose function is to guide and supervise the projected movement. The decree also covers various essential details of organization, obligations and rights of members, audit and inspection, and voting procedure.

The successful co-operative experiment of Abadiyeh village, in the mountains above Beirut, provides a striking demonstration of the manner in which such a developmental scheme can

17: Tannous S, G-5 (ca. 1947-48)1949 ME1 Lebanon ME1

be successfully grafted upon the traditional community spirit and yield fruit. This society was started by a rural leader of the country, a native of the village, under the auspices of the American University of Beirut and the Near East Foundation of New York. It has been functioning continuously and successfully for more than ten years, a modern co-operative enterprise flourishing on the foundations of the traditional mutual aid of the village community.

Emphasis has been made upon two great needs in Lebanese agriculture — extension of credit at reasonable rates for productive purposes, and efficient marketing of produce. In both respects the Abadiyeh people have been amply rewarded. Over 300 of them belong to the society, representing, as heads of families, the great majority of the total population. The bulk of the surplus of grapes, the major crop of the village, amounting to over 1,000 tons, is marketed through the co-operative. With efficient packing and guaranteed grading, it brings higher prices in Beirut markets than others less carefully prepared. Loans to members have steadily increased. The farmers have been educated to borrow only for productive purposes, at a low rate of interest, and to pay back on time. They have also learned how to apply some of the profits to public services. Three or four other villages have already followed the example of Abadiyeh.

If given the encouragement and guidance that is initially necessary, the co-operative will find an unusually fertile soil for rapid growth in the rural society of Lebanon. Not only the problems of credit and marketing, but also those of increased crop production, livestock improvement, and procurement of supplies could be solved to a large extent by this form of organization. More important still, the co-operative society could develop ultimately into the integrating and dynamic center of village life.

III

Some fifty years ago, significant changes began to take place in the life of the Lebanese rural community. The main factors involved have been large-scale emigration to foreign countries; rapid development of elementary and higher education, mostly under the influence of Western agencies; expanded trade and

59; Allen et al S-3 (1952-53) 1953 MI Middle East
Lebanon MEI

II. LEBANON

(Visited 1 - 15 December 1952)

1. The total area of Le anon is about 4,300 square miles, the population being estimated in 1940 at one and-a quarter million, of whom a high proportion live in the principal towns. For many years there has been considerable migration to foreign countries, and it is said that as many Lebanese live abroad as are to be found in their native land. 131 162 167

2. Lebanon is mainly a fruit-growing agricultural country, but pipelines from Middle East oil fields are being laid across the country to connect with newly constructed installations and harbours on the coast. In due course this development may influence the economy of the country. 241 315

3. Great hopes of agricultural expansion - to be accompanied, it is claimed, by schemes of rural community developments - are based upon the Litani Dam and irrigation project. At the time of our visit this project was under discussion between the Government and the United States Technical Cooperation Administration (Point IV), but matters had not advanced sufficiently to justify our attempting to follow in detail the intentions with regard to community welfare centres. 241 433 185

4. The agency of the Lebanese Government responsible for social affairs has only recently (1951) been raised to the status of Ministry. Still more recently, there had been a change of government and the new Minister of Social Affairs also held two other portfolios. The Director-General of the Department whom I met had not been continuously in office over the past years. No reply had been returned by the relevant Department to the Secretary-General's request (at the end of 1951) for information on community welfare centres. Background information was difficult to obtain. A decree which would have permitted the provision of multi-purpose community centres and enabled government support to be given in cash or by way of services, had been promulgated in 1951 (Appendix I). The decree had not, however, been put into operation. The initiative in instituting or developing such multi-purpose activities as we had the opportunity of seeing at Chtaura, Anjar and Jibrail had come mainly from voluntary agencies. 647 185

5. We visited the Chtaura Demonstration Centre and Anjar project on the 4th and 12th of December. The purpose of the original centre was to provide for Armenian refugees from World War I and in the earlier stages both the Near East Foundation and the Howard Karagheusian Commemorative Corporation shared responsibilities for financing and management of settlements in this area. More recently, the Near East Foundation decided to concentrate on activities in Syria and Greece and brought its work at Chtaura to a close. Mr. Feldmahn of the Near East Foundation, who had had a long experience between the wars in community organization in Bulgaria before coming to Chtaura, then transferred to the Karagheusian Corporation. With his wife, he now supervises the various activities in a group of villages located in the Bekaa Valley between Beirut and Damascus. These activities include control of malaria, recreational programmes, organization of marketing, provision of seedlings and plants, poultry breeding, milk co-operatives and educational projects. 361 185

6. At the time of our visit an illustrated lecture by an American veterinary expert (Point IV) was in progress. The co-operative milk marketing scheme appeared to be successful and to make a useful contribution to the milk supply of Beirut. The housing provided for the settlers and the general appearance of the village at Anjar were satisfactory. That of the Arab village of Medjel-Anjar some distance away was less so. In a former disused school house there was a primitive maternity and child 234 474 600

LEBANON MEI

312 744 *Concerning the Embankments of Water Conduits and Aqueducts for a Public Drinking Water Supply*

Article 25 to 29 set forth the prescribed width and other specifications for embankments along drinking water conduits and aqueducts.

The width of such aqueducts shall be stipulated by decree of the head of the government. The setting out of plantations or construction work along these conduits is prohibited, and the administration may order the felling of trees already growing there and the demolition or change of any previously existing structures within such areas.

Waterworks Construction Associations

312 474 656 Upon the initiative of the interested parties or of the head of the government, hydraulic associations may be formed for the purpose of building works for agricultural improvement, flood control, the repair, maintenance and cleaning of water courses, land drainage, reclamation and levelling and the construction of embankments or irrigation works.

Requests addressed to the head of the government must contain all pertinent information as to the area involved, the purpose, the projects and the type of concession intended.

If such a request, upon being reviewed by the Minister of Public Works, is deemed worthy of approval, the local landowners shall be called to a meeting by the head of the government. The meeting shall proceed to the selection of a chairman, and the minutes of the meeting, including the names of the persons attending, shall be kept. The heads of municipalities, administrators of public property and the director of land service for the public domain may also attend such meetings.

If the formation of such an association is voted by simple majority, the project, with complete details as to the nature of the association, its operation, its contemplated program of work and estimates of expenditures and contributions of each person involved shall be submitted to the head of the government who shall order a 30-day investigation of the matter, during which time any person or persons who have not joined the contemplated association may offer to convey their land, against payment of an indemnity, to

the association organized. 312 474 656

Within this period and after the Minister of Public Works has advised in favor thereof, the head of the government shall issue a decree stating that such an association has been established. This decree shall set forth its aims, the projected construction works and the method of defraying expenses by dividing them up among members of the association.

An annual budget shall be submitted for approval to the head of the government who is authorized to set or change the total tax sums to be set aside for this purpose.

Disputes over the operation of the association shall be heard by the administrative tribunals.

Plans and methods of execution of all construction works must be submitted to the Public Works Service which will exercise technical supervision.

The head of the government may grant non-interest bearing loans and subsidies to the association, on terms which he will prescribe, for a period of no longer than 30 years.

Articles 48 to 53 govern the rules of procedure of such associations, particularly their administrative organs (assembly, syndicate, director and staff), their procedure for their election and their term of office.

The general assembly, as written in the constitution, may also dissolve the association by a simple majority vote, provided such action is approved by the head of the government in an official decree.

The head of the government may, in case of mismanagement, place in the hands of one person full power over the director and the association, and he may also send representatives to all meetings or assemblies.

Jurisdiction and Penalties

Articles 57 to 60 prescribe jurisdiction and penalties. 312 681

It is stipulated that infractions of this decree shall be reported in the form of a deposition by officers of the